

CLAIMS

We Claim:

1. An apparatus for allowing multiple types of connections to be made to a peripheral component, said apparatus comprising:
  - a) a peripheral component; and
  - b) a receptacle coupled to said peripheral component, said receptacle having a plurality of electrical connecting lines, wherein at least one of said plurality of electrical connecting lines is adapted to be utilized as a signal line for more than one type of connection to be made directly to said receptacle.
2. The apparatus of Claim 1 further comprising:
  - a) a plurality of electrical pathways coupled to said peripheral component;
  - b) switching logic coupled to said peripheral component, said switching logic adapted to switch said electrical connecting lines between said plurality of electrical pathways.
3. The apparatus of Claim 2 further comprising: connection-type determination logic interfacing with said switching logic, said determination logic adapted to determine said connection-type being made to said receptacle, wherein one electrical pathway of said plurality of electrical pathways which is appropriate for said connection-type being established is maintained.

4. The apparatus of Claim 1 wherein said connection-types are selected from a first, a second, and a third type of connection.
- 5 5. The apparatus of Claim 4 wherein said first connection-type is a LAN.
6. The apparatus of Claim 4 wherein said second connection-type is a modem.
- 10 7. The apparatus of Claim 4 wherein said third connection-type is an ISDN.
8. An apparatus for allowing multiple types of connections to be made to 15 a peripheral component, said apparatus comprising:  
a) a peripheral component; and  
b) a receptacle coupled to said peripheral component, said receptacle having a plurality of electrical connecting lines, wherein at least one of said plurality of electrical connecting lines is adapted to be utilized as a signal 20 line for more than one type of connection to be made directly to said receptacle, such that said more than one type of connection can be made to said receptacle without requiring the use of an intermediate connection device.

9. The apparatus of Claim 8 further comprising:

a) a plurality of electrical pathways coupled to said peripheral component;

b) switching logic coupled to said peripheral component, said

5 switching logic adapted to switch said electrical connecting lines between said plurality of electrical pathways.

10. The apparatus of Claim 9 further comprising:

connection-type determination logic interfacing with said switching  
10 logic, said determination logic adapted to determine said connection-type being made to said receptacle, wherein one electrical pathway of said plurality of electrical pathways which is appropriate for said connection-type being established is maintained.

15 11. The apparatus of Claim 10 wherein said connection-type is an ISDN.

12. A method for allowing multiple types of connections to be made to a peripheral component comprising the steps of:

a) providing a peripheral component;  
20 b) providing a receptacle coupled to said peripheral component, said receptacle having a plurality of electrical connecting lines, wherein at least one of said plurality of electrical connecting lines is adapted to be utilized as a signal line for more than one type of connection to be made directly to said receptacle;

- c) switching said electrical connecting lines between a plurality of electrical pathways;
- d) determining said type of connection being made to said receptacle; and
- 5       e) establishing an electrical pathway which is appropriate for said type of connection, wherein pre-defined electrical connecting lines which are appropriate for said connection-type are utilized as communication lines by said connection-type.
- 10      13. The method of Claim 12 wherein step d) further comprises determining said type of connection selected from a first, a second, and a third type of connection.
14.     The method of Claim 13 further comprising determining said type of  
15     connection to be a LAN.
15.     The method of Claim 13 further comprising determining said type of connection to be a modem.
- 20      16. The method of Claim 13 further comprising determining said type of connection to be an ISDN.

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